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Silverton Hospital taking steps to prevent COVID-19

Bill Poehler
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Legacy Silverton Medical Center is taking additional steps to protect its patients and workers against COVID-19.

The hospital is adding protective plexiglass barriers at the emergency department desk to protect registration clerks starting Wednesday and screening all people entering the hospital, including employees, to help deter the spread of the coronavirus.

"Any patients who enter the hospital showing symptoms of illness are being given a mask to wear,"

said Legacy Health director of public relations Brian Terrett.

Silverton Hospital signed an agreement to in 2015 to be operated by Legacy Health, a non-profit which operates hospitals including Legacy Emanuel Medical Center and Legacy Good Samaritan Medical Center in Portland, Legacy Meridian Park Medical Center in Tualatin and Legacy Mount Hood Medical Center in Gresham.

"Visitors have largely been restricted, but anyone meeting the few visitor exemptions will not be allowed in if they are showing symptoms of illness," he said. "Any employees showing symptoms of illness will be redirected for additional examination."



Silverton Health and Legacy Health have signed a letter of intent, taking another step toward becoming one system, Silverton Health announced Tuesday. STATESMAN JOURNAL FILE

The 48-bed hospital opened in 1917 and moved to its current location in 1938.

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Kyle Kirsch assembles a face shield kit in his home in Salem, Oregon, on Friday, April 3, 2020. He builds the kits out of plastic headbands that he prints from his four 3D printers and basic binding covers from an office supply store. CONNOR RADNOVICH / STATESMAN JOURNAL

Inmates could be solution to face mask shortage

Bill Poehler
Salem Statesman Journal
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To provide our community with important public safety information, our newsroom is making stories related to the coronavirus free to read. To support important local journalism like this, please consider becoming a digital subscriber.

Hospitals throughout the world have been unable to get new supplies of personal protective equipment such as face masks, gowns and gloves due to the shortage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thousands of inmates in Oregon could be one solution.

Oregon Corrections Enterprises, a semi-independent state agency, is producing 30,000 non-medical face masks for use by the Department of Corrections and is seeking to make medical-grade masks for hospitals that could help fill the shortfall.

"In an emergency you can't get the help quick enough," OCE Administrator Ken Jeske said.

A 1994 ballot measure required inmates in Oregon to work 40 hours each week or receive on-the-job training.

Oregon Corrections Enterprises has operated at most Oregon prisons since 1999 and receives no taxpayer dollars. It is self-sustaining through sales of its products and services.

Its inmate employees normally produce items such as park benches, gun safes, grills, furniture and clothing. They also provide services such as working in a DMV call center.

A few weeks ago, the Oregon Employment Department expressed need for hand sanitizer stations.

The furniture factory at the Oregon State Penitentiary in Salem abruptly shifted its production to make stands and completed 80 in less than a day.

Jeske said the 30,000 non-medical masks OCE is making from cotton are for the Department of Corrections for use by inmates and guards to reduce the risk of infection.

"They're not a medical-grade masks so they would just go to everybody," he said.

With the significant need for medical-grade masks, FEMA approached the Department of Corrections to see if OCE could make masks and what steps it would take to ensure they are sterile.

Jeske said he has been meeting with correctional industries across the country to share information about how to make the masks.

Making a certifiable medical-grade mask isn't like sewing a throw pillow and most manufacturers closely guard their manufacturing processes, Jeske said.

Then there is the question of getting the masks certified for use by health care professionals.

"We're also working with ... the FDA and trying to figure out if we can get certified ... meaning the correct type of fabric and the right type of material," Jeske said.

"We finally sourced the material that we believe is actually the right material and now we're talking with the Oregon Health Authority, FEMA, and making sure we can be 1, not sued, and 2, produce adequate supply."

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SILVERTON MAN MAKES MASKS

3D printers create plastic headbands for face shields

Christena Brooks
Special to Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Amid the acute shortage of masks, gowns, gloves and other personal protective equipment caused by the Coronavirus pandemic, help – and hope – came from a surprising new corner of local industry.

Silverton-area resident Kyle Kirsch, 33, began hearing about 3D printing hobbyists making protective gear for hospital staff and first responders who couldn't get enough – or any.

With his own home business in 3D printing, he jumped at the chance to see what he could produce. A 3D printer can make just about anything that can be designed on a computer, by extruding molten plastic through a nozzle.

"There's a pretty big movement of people printing face shields across the world and giving them out to fill the needs in their communities," Kirsch said. "I found an open-source design, printed out a couple, and posted a picture online."

That first design was a simple plastic headband

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Dr. Tomas Gigena in Silverton uses a face shield made by Kyle Kirsch using a 3D printer. SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

Jefferson small businesses band together

Bill Poehler
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

JEFFERSON — If you lived in this south Marion County city or one of many similar rural communities, you were used to driving to local small businesses for groceries or food from restaurants for day-to-day shopping and dining.

In small towns where there are no chain restaurants and few drive through options, many local businesses have been forced to quickly adapt to social distancing requirements and navigate executive orders to continue operating.

Seeing a downturn in business a few weeks ago and sensing it could get worse, Santiam Market & Deli owner Megan Schuster rallied a group of small business owners from throughout the city to discuss options to reach their regular customers.

A week later, JeffersonDelivers.com launched with seven small businesses in Jefferson.

"I wanted to do something, but I didn't want to do something that would only benefit us," said Schuster, who owns Santiam Market & Deli with husband Gu-naji Kolekar.

Some Jefferson businesses, such as Guadalajara

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Inmates at the Eastern Oregon Corrections Institution in Pendleton are sewing face masks for use in prisons. SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

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